

American women to gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics; from Eliza Jane Pratt, the first woman to represent North Carolina in the United States Congress to Elizabeth Dole, the first female U.S. Senator from North Carolina and dedicated public servant, the history of North Carolina's women is America's history, and it is truly remarkable.

During Women's History Month, we honor the generations of women who have achieved notoriety in the past, however, we must do more than remember. It is imperative that we reflect on the present and prepare for the future. It is the hardworking North Carolina women who are continuing to serve our society as parents, doctors, teachers, nurses, businesswomen, soldiers, marines, and in countless other capacities that will impact our Nation's history in a powerful and positive way. We must build on the legacy of these great North Carolina women, especially those who serve anonymously and who have preserved the American way of life while contributing so much to the strength and character of our Nation. The women of our great State have triumphed throughout our history, and I know that they will play a leading role in our future.

CLOSING THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, on March 4, 2010, John Patrick Bedell, a 36-year-old Californian with a history of mental illness, arrived at the Pentagon after a manic, cross-country journey. At 6:40 pm, Mr. Bedell, armed with two 9mm handguns, walked to the security checkpoint at the Pentagon entrance and started shooting. Three Pentagon security officers, Colin Richards, Jeffrey Amos and Marvin Carraway, returned fire and brought down Mr. Bedell, who later died from his injuries. Mr. Amos and Mr. Carraway were wounded in the exchange, but thankfully have fully recovered. If not for the decisive action taken by these brave officers, this apparently random attack could have claimed more victims. And while I am pleased the Pentagon's security system worked in this instance, I remain deeply troubled by the fact that Mr. Bedell was able to acquire firearms in the first place.

Since the shooting, law enforcement officials have been able to partially trace the firearms used by Mr. Bedell. One handgun was sold last year to a private individual at a Las Vegas gun show, and that person later resold the gun to a third person. At that point, according to authorities, they were not able to further trace the gun's ownership history until Mr. Bedell opened fire on March 4. This murky trail perfectly illustrates the danger of unregulated, private firearm transactions.

Under the Brady Law, before an individual can purchase a gun from a licensed dealer, they must pass a background check to ensure they are not le-

gally prohibited from purchasing a firearm. In 2008, 9.9 million background checks were conducted for firearm purchases, 147,000 of which were rejected. The majority of these denials were the consequence of a prior conviction, indictment or a history of mental illness. However, when an individual purchases a handgun from a private citizen, who is not a licensed gun dealer, there are no requirements to ensure that the purchaser is not in a prohibited category. Neither the Las Vegas gun show sale, nor the subsequent private transactions that ultimately resulted in Mr. Bedell acquiring the firearm, were regulated. Due to this "gun show loophole" in federal law, authorities were not aware of, or able to block this string of private sales, which led to Mr. Bedell purchasing the weapon and using it to attack the Pentagon. In fact, according to news reports, Mr. Bedell attempted to buy a gun from a licensed firearm dealer in California, but the sale was blocked because he fell into a prohibited category.

Because private party transactions account for approximately 40 percent of all gun sales, current Federal background check requirements have a limited impact on the overall rates of gun related violent crime. To better protect our communities from gun related violence, background checks should be required for all prospective firearm transactions, including private transactions. To that end, I am a cosponsor of the Gun Show Background Check Act of 2009, S.843, which was introduced by Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. This bill would extend the protections of the Brady Law to purchases made at gun shows, thereby closing the loophole that currently permits gun sales without criminal background checks. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass this commonsense legislation.

PASSAGE OF S. 3186

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate acted to pass legislation that will extend key provisions of the Satellite Home Viewer Act through the end of April. The statutory licenses and Communications Act authorizations that are contained in this act allow consumers to receive broadcast network stations by satellite. These consumers are otherwise unable to receive these signals over-the-air, and ensuring that they continue to have access to network programming is critical. I understand that the House of Representatives also took up and passed the Senate measure last night. By passing this short-term extension, we can be sure that nobody will be left in the dark while Congress is away. I look forward to a full reauthorization of this act being signed into law once we return from Easter recess.

RED CROSS MONTH

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wish today to join with the American

Red Cross and celebrate March as American Red Cross Month. Throughout the history of this organization, the American Red Cross has demonstrated not only their fierce and patriotic loyalty to this country and our needs but to those abroad as well.

This year, many of our brothers and sisters worldwide have experienced extreme devastation. The earthquakes in Haiti and Chile showed us not only how fragile life can be but the importance of humanitarian response to those in need.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist, historian, and Nobel Laureate for literature knew the power of our interconnectedness as it relates to our own humanity. He said, "The salvation of mankind lies only in making everything the concern of all."

No other organization embodies this philosophy more than the American Red Cross and of the vision articulated by Clara Barton, founder of this wonderful organization that has helped countless individuals—both domestic and abroad—in times of crisis.

Whether comforting a wounded soldier during battle, assisting those who are recovering from a natural disaster, or administering life-saving blood to a sick patient, the American Red Cross is there, never wavering but standing steadfast in the service to humanity.

This year especially, they have been ever vigilant in remaining true to the humanitarian nature of their organization. In Haiti, the Red Cross distributions of food and relief supplies continue throughout urban settlements and are reaching approximately 12,500 people each day. To date, nearly 27,000 people have been vaccinated in the coordinated immunization campaign, in which the Red Cross health care units and the Haitian National Red Cross Society are participating. The American Red Cross has provided approximately \$375,000 in operational funding for this campaign.

In Chile, the American Red Cross has increased the funds committed from its International Response Fund to \$250,000 in support of Red Cross response operations. It will be contributing these funds toward the International Federation's emergency appeal. Additionally, the International Federation has announced a disaster plan of action and funding in the amount of \$6.4 million to support Chilean Red Cross relief operations to assist 75,000 people for 6 months in the areas of shelter, water and sanitation, health and telecommunications. This is in addition to \$280,000 released from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund.

Like the national headquarters of the American Red Cross, I am extremely proud of our Kansas chapters of the American Red Cross organizations and volunteers. From responding to our own State's natural disasters, to providing programs to our troops such as the Holiday Mail for Heroes Program to providing much needed health and wellness courses—these individuals are